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ABSTRACT

This study examined characteristics of elementary teachers who used the arts regularly in class, including their attitudes toward art and children, perceptions and definitions of the artistic parts of their lives and teaching, their reconciliation of time spent in arts activities with external pressures for test preparation and standardized curriculum and pedagogy, and their perceptions of staff development in helping implement artistic methods. Teachers involved in four arts-based staff development programs completed surveys on their attitudes toward arts in the curriculum and frequency of use of arts for various purposes in the classroom. Results identified 11 teachers in the highest use group. Further analysis revealed patterns of use that separated them by active facilitation of arts activities and exposure-type activities. Six teachers representing each group completed interviews. Four teachers interviewed participated in more than one week-long summer arts institute and up to four full-day workshops during the school year, collaborating on arts-integrated curriculum projects with visiting artists. Teachers shared many personality characteristics that helped them create artistic classroom climates, though types and frequency of arts experiences they facilitated varied greatly. They were unique in their attitudes supporting the arts and specific skills as facilitators of artistic processes. (Contains 68 references.) (SM)

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Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, April 24-28, 2000, New Orleans, LA.

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Artistic Choices: How and Why Teachers Use the Arts in the Classroom

Barry Oreck, University of Connecticut[1]

Introduction

In this era of unprecedented standardized testing, teachers face serious challenges to their creativity and autonomy in the classroom. The political demands for accountability based on high-stakes tests drive a movement for standardized curriculum and prescriptive pedagogy that places teachers squarely in the middle of a struggle for control of the curriculum, the classroom and, in many places, the school itself (Airasian, 1988; Gipps, 1999). Ironically, at the same moment, and in many of the same schools, the arts are experiencing a resurgence as part of the curriculum and staff development initiatives for teachers around the country (Fowler, 1996; Remer,1996).

This new interest in the arts is the result of many forces, most notably the national and state standards in the arts adopted in 47 states (National Center for Education Statistics, 1998) and research on the nature of learning, intelligence and creativity (Gardner, 1993; Goleman, 1995; Renzulli, 1994; Sternberg, 1988). This research highlights the diversity of students and the variety of creative teaching approaches needed to help all students learn. Even as the number of arts specialists has continued to decline in most schools (U.S. Department of Education, 1995), curricular approaches that integrate artistic methods have increased significantly. Applications of Multiple Intelligences Theory (Gardner, 1983), portfolio assessments and exhibitions (Sizer, 1984; Vickers, 1996; Wolf & Reardon, 1996), new writing and reading processes (Calkins, 1986; Peterson & Marion, 1990), cross-disciplinary and applied learning standards (Kendall & Marzano, 1997), among others, all employ aspects of artistic processes and rely on the teacher's ability to facilitate and assess creative work in a variety of modalities, and to respond to students spontaneously and intuitively.

While many of these new methods encourage artistic approaches and attitudes, intense pressure for immediate test score results pushes teachers toward the most directive forms of drill and repetition. Highly prescriptive, even scripted methods such as Direct Instruction (Adams & Engelmann,1996) and Success for All (Slavin & Madden, 1999), often show quick results but can undermine the creativity and autonomy of both teacher and student (Deci, Kasser & Ryan, 1997;

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Hattie, Jaeger & Bond, 1999). The flood of new standards and curriculum in all of the major subject areas, while often emphasizing the development of higher order thinking skills and creativity, can overwhelm teachers and limit their use of creative, open-ended explorations and in-depth projects. In this climate, many teachers feel that they lack the time and the autonomy to use the arts and that their jobs will be in jeopardy if they do not follow the given structures or scripts.

Despite these pressures, some teachers find ways to use the arts in the classroom on a regular basis. Given the low priority and lack of resources for the arts in many schools we might conclude that arts users are simply highly unusual people driven by their personal passions. The central question for staff developers becomes: "Can we teach the skills and attitudes needed to use the arts frequently and well, and if so, how?" Common questions raised by teachers in staff development workshops highlight the challenges. "What do we mean by arts?" "What priority should the arts have and how can I add another subject to the curriculum ?" "Can a teacher who is not an artist be expected to teach the arts?" "How can I justify the time spent on an art process?" "What are the outcomes of artistic learning and will they show up on tests?" These and other personal and philosophical questions concern teachers as they consider how to apply the lessons learned in staff development to their own teaching practice.

Is it Art? Issues of Definition

One of the obstacles to studying the arts in the classroom is the lack of a simple definition of what constitutes an artistic experience. Teachers themselves feel the ambiguities as they think about planning arts activities. Is it art? Will it be good art? These are important questions, but if overly focused on the product rather than the process, they may miss the point.

John Dewey (1934; 1958) placed the definition of the arts in the realm of experience as opposed to product. Dewey found the source of the artistic experience in everyday life and saw the aesthetic qualities of experience as a central educational value (Jackson, 1998). Since Dewey, investigations into the nature of art in the realms of psychology, art history, and aesthetics have further broadened our views of the arts in education and clarified the essential place of art in creating meaning and understanding the world.

Art that is defined not as separate skills or distinct disciplines but as characteristics of experience blurs the distinctions between art maker and art perceiver and clearly establishes that art experiences are in the domain of everyone, not a special class dubbed "artist." Vygotsky

(1971) said that "art is the social within us" (p. 255), an essential psychological mechanism for finding equilibrium with our environment. He attributed the transforming power of art to the experience as both producer and observer. In this sense, almost any classroom activity can be seen as artistic to some extent through its aesthetic qualities. These characteristics include: 1) attention to form and qualities (Beardsley, 1970; Osborne, 1991); 2) connections to feelings, memories and personal experience (Goleman, 1997); 3) a sense of wholeness or completeness of experience (Jackson, 1998); 4) the ability to use multiple forms of expression (Eisner 1994); and 5) involvement in a task for its own sake (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). These five characteristics, widely defined and discussed in the field of aesthetic education, allow us to identify artistic aspects of the teaching and learning experience, rather than to define arts simply as separate disciplines, each with its own set of rules and conventions.

Eisner (1994b) suggests that art is a "process in which skills are employed to discover ends through action" (p. 155). A craft, on the other hand, uses skills to "arrive at preconceived ends" (ibid). The nature of artistic discovery is thus in stark contrast to the preconceived ends of "covering" curriculum or increasing the number of correct answers on a test. The teacher's ability to allow students to truly explore and make discoveries, find and pursue problems, and arrive at unique solutions, requires both an artistic pedagogy and the understanding to preserve the aesthetic qualities of the artistic experience.

The Art of Teaching and Teaching with Arts: Finding an Artistic Pedagogy

The primary purpose of arts instruction in staff development programs has not been to transform academic classroom teachers into arts specialists. The general aims are to promote creative and artistic teaching and learning by increasing teachers' understanding of and efficacy in using an expanded repertoire of teaching techniques and artistic processes grounded in a constructivist, child-centered philosophy and pedagogy (Dewey 1934; Kolb, 1984). Dewey (1933) believed that the teacher's status as an artist is "measured by his ability to foster the attitude of the artist in those who study with him" (p. 288). Gage (1978) calls teaching a "practical art...a process that calls for intuition, creativity, improvisation and expressiveness" (p. 15). The arts, in this context, are not a single subject or set of activities. Rather the arts in teaching can most broadly be defined as processes, skills, and methods that allow and enhance artistic expression and aesthetic perception (Eisner, 1985; Gardner, 1973; May, 1993).

Teachers may encounter particular difficulties in identifying the specific instructional purpose for the arts because of the range of functions the arts can play in the curriculum. The arts can be 1) a separate curricular area covered by state and national standards (Consortium of National Arts Education Organizations, 1994), 2) activities used to teach other academic subjects (Cecil & Lauritzen, 1994), and 3) methods and skills for acquiring and communicating knowledge (Gallas, 1994). These three types of arts involvement are referred to by Goldberg (1997) as teaching *about*, *in*, or *through* the arts and are often combined under the term "arts integration" (Fowler, 1996; Remer, 1995).

In a study of teachers who had been involved in a three year arts-based staff development program (ArtsConnection, 1997; Oreck, Baum & Owen, 1999) teachers were asked about frequency of use, sense of importance, and confidence in using the arts for various instructional purposes – exposure to art, development of artistic skills, enhancement of academic content, development of basic academic skills, student assessment, and promotion of student self-regulatory behaviors. Teachers, even those who used the arts most frequently, did not clearly differentiate among the six different instructional purposes. Perhaps they intended to achieve many of these purposes simultaneously or had a more generalized objective in mind. Teachers did distinguish, however, between art forms. As found in other research (Stake, Bresler, & Mabry, 1991), teachers were more confident in visual arts and theater and reported using them significantly more frequently than dance or music.

Just as certain art forms seem to be used more frequently, some subject areas lend themselves more readily to arts integration. Writing, particularly independent journal writing, poetry, dramatic scripts, or personal narratives, can generate numerous connections with any art form. Likewise, the study of cultures in social studies may lead naturally to art study through either exposure or participatory activities. Many teachers find math and science more difficult subjects for arts integration.

Another key factor in defining the type and frequency of arts use is the skill and level of comfort the teacher feels in playing various roles as facilitator of arts experiences. The most common facilitator role for teachers involves exposing students to existing art work and leading discourse. This role includes selecting appropriate materials and resources; leading class discussions, analysis and critique; and focusing students on key concepts and connections. The second role is as facilitator/director of participatory dance, music, theater, visual, or literary arts

activities. Organizing, structuring and leading an art-making process, whether in a classroom or on a stage or gym, requires another set of skills and confidence as a facilitator. The third common role for teachers in the arts occurs when a visiting artist or arts specialist works with the class. This role can be highly complex, sometimes combining the first two roles and sometimes expanding to include collaborator, co-teacher, or assistant functions.

In the best examples of teaching and learning in the arts, the facilitator can take on a variety of roles as students move through creation, observation, response to, and reflections on art. As teachers gain more experience in structuring and leading different types of arts activities they may see less separation between the roles and between the arts and other lessons and activities. Whatever the nature of the artistic experience, the facilitator establishes the climate, structures the process, and nurtures the artistic expression of the students. The specific skills of each role and of each art form may vary but the basic attitudes and pedagogy share many common elements.

In order to determine what teachers need to become more effective arts facilitators it is essential to understand their attitudes toward the arts and factors that motivate or undermine their attempts to implement artistic methods and approaches in their teaching. Little data exists on teachers' attitudes toward the arts in teaching or the effectiveness of staff development efforts to promote the use of artistic methods in the classroom. McKean (1999) suggested that teachers' orientations towards the use of the arts are shaped, to a great extent by childhood experiences and formal training in the arts. Stake, Bresler, and Mabry (1991) concur, stating that "only those few teachers who have artistic background and most specialists, those who have practiced art seriously have an alternative, realistic set of schemas and paradigms for teaching the arts" (p. 318). Most other investigations into teacher attitudes toward the arts have been theoretical (Bolton, 1984; Efland, 1979; Hargreaves, Galton, & Robinson, 1989) or conducted in specialized schools, such as Montessori or Waldorf, that seek to fully integrate the arts into the curriculum and use multiple forms of assessment (Buermann, 1992; Richards, 1980).

The most extensive relevant literature on teacher development is in the area of creativity. Creativity is widely seen as an inborn capacity of all people, but researchers have shown that many methods, attitudes, and qualities of creative teaching can be taught (Miel, 1961; Torrance & Myers, 1970). Smith (1966) defines particular physical, socio-emotional, psychological and educational conditions that are present in the creative classroom. While these conditions can be

assumed to be a prerequisite for the arts, few studies have addressed the specific skills and pedagogy required to facilitate complete, satisfying artistic processes in the classroom. Further, little is known about the effectiveness of arts instruction, in either pre- or in-service staff development, to change teaching behaviors and actual implementation of arts activities in the classroom.

Method

In the first phase of a mixed-methods research study, surveys of elementary school teachers (n = 71) involved in arts-based staff development workshops revealed a wide range of attitudes toward and patterns of use of the arts in the classroom. The full study will seek to identify characteristics and attitudes of teachers that can predict levels of use and participation in arts-based in-service staff development workshops. In order to define those levels and create a realistic model of exemplary practice as it exists in the classroom, this part of the study looked at a small group of teachers who use the arts frequently and have voluntarily participated in staff development workshops.

Questions guiding the research. The general questions guiding this study are: What are the characteristics of teachers who use the arts regularly? What are their attitudes toward art and children? How do they perceive and define the artistic part of their lives and teaching practice? How do they reconcile the time they spend in arts activities with the external pressures for test preparation and standardized curriculum and pedagogy? Has staff development helped them to implement artistic methods and what lessons can we take from their experiences that can help us provide more effective staff development programs?

Participants. In the first phase of the study, 71 teachers involved in four different arts-based staff development programs completed a newly developed survey (Teaching with the Arts Survey, Oreck, 1999) concerning their attitudes toward the arts in the curriculum and their frequency of use of the arts for various purposes in the classroom. The sample represented a range of urban, suburban, and rural schools in grades K-12 and consisted of 65 women and 6 men, 36 classroom teachers and 35 specialists, with an average age of 38 and with an average of 10 years of teaching experience. Summaries of survey responses identified 11 teachers in the highest use group. Further analysis using multidimensional scaling (MDS) revealed patterns of use among teachers that separated the group into active facilitation of arts activities (e.g. leading rhythm or theater games) and exposure-type activities (playing recorded music or attending

museums). Based on these initial analyses, teachers representing each group were selected for interviews.

Six teachers were identified for interviews in the initial phase of the research, representing a purposive sample selected to provide a range of perspectives on the subject. All of the six work in New York City public elementary schools. Three are women and three are men. Four are classroom teachers (grade 2, grade 4, and two in grade 5) and two are specialists (one theater, one reading). They have between 5 and 15 years of teaching experience. The six teachers vary widely in their artistic and cultural backgrounds, the roles they play as arts facilitators in the classroom, and the instructional purposes for which they use arts activities. A brief profile of each teacher follows.

Mirla immigrated to the United States from the Dominican Republic when she was in fourth grade. She studied dance as a child but as an adult did not participate in any formal arts instruction until she attended staff development workshops in the arts after her third year of teaching. She has been teaching for 8 years, first in fifth and sixth grades in East Harlem and now as a reading specialist and staff developer in the Bronx.

Patricia teaches fifth grade in Brooklyn. She was very involved in music as a child, winning awards for her playing of the Irish flute, but dropped music when she got to college. She attended a summer training institute in the arts after her first year of teaching because she says, "I was new, just open to everything."

Tom worked in the visual arts, as a printmaker and manager of a print shop and photography studio for ten years before going back to school to become a teacher. He primarily uses visual arts with his second grade class although he collaborates with another teacher to mount productions involving music, dance, and visual arts elements.

Andy came to teaching after a career as a newspaper reporter. He taught third, fourth and fifth grade for 13 years and had little formal arts experience. He felt that humor was his greatest asset in reaching his students. After initial reluctance he began attending staff development workshops in the arts where he discovered his talent and passion for improvisational theater. He found ways of using theater games and improvisation throughout his curriculum and became the school's theater specialist when the opportunity presented itself.

Jennifer teaches fourth grade in Queens. She grew up in a neighborhood near the school in which she teaches but when she came to the United States in fifth grade she was the only Korean

child in a primarily German and Italian school. Now the neighborhood is multi-ethnic with a large Asian population. As a child, she initially had a difficult transition, but by Junior High School was active in the drama club and describes herself as a very dramatic, outgoing person.

Mike has taught for eight years in Brooklyn, going back to school to become a teacher after owning his own trucking business. He has had little formal art instruction but has a deep interest in and appreciation for visual art and music and collaborates with visiting artists who work with his fifth grade class. Initially reluctant to working with visiting artists, he has become an active, enthusiastic collaborator.

Staff Development Interventions: Four of the six teachers participated in more than one week-long summer arts institute and as many as four full-day workshops during the school year, and collaborated on arts-integrated curriculum projects with visiting professional teaching artists in programs provided by ArtsConnection, a New York City arts-in-education organization (ArtsConnection,1997). They received compensation for many of the activities but spent a substantial amount of additional time in planning, writing and meetings without pay. Mike, who did not participate in the on-going in-service staff development program, was involved in another long-term collaborative process consisting of participatory workshops and joint planning and reflection meetings with visiting artists through year-long arts residencies. Tom participated only in pre-service staff development, concentrating on art forms other than his speciality, visual arts.

Interviews and Analysis. Prior research and preliminary interviews identified emergent categories in five general dimensions -- motivations, concerns, self-efficacy, self-image, and support – that help to define levels and types of use of the arts in teaching practice. Teachers were interviewed using semi-structured protocols. After transcribing the interviews, establishing codes and completing initial analyses, the interviewer conducted a second round of interviews with four of the six teachers to clarify ambiguities and pursue lines of questioning that had emerged in the initial interviews.

Transcripts of all interviews were coded, with an open-coded classification system (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993), using Nud•ist 4.0 (QSR, 1999) software. In order to enhance the generalizability of these data, thick description was provided (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), including observations of the school environment, demographic information, published school policies in the arts, and information on other professional development workshops provided to teachers.

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Findings

Personal Characteristics, Background and Choices

1. ***These are highly independent individuals who have made choices about where, who, and what they teach.***

The makeup of this group suggests that being independent, even rebellious, may be an important characteristic in being able to withstand the external pressures to conform in these school settings. All have made personal choices that put them in situations in which they feel they can do their best work. Jenny commutes from New Jersey to Sunnyside, Queens because she wanted to teach "students of immigrant families, students of diverse backgrounds" including Koreans, and because she says the highly respected suburban school system where she lives is "all text-book based." Both Jennifer and Mirla feel that their immigrant experiences help them empathize with students who are struggling in school. Mirla travels 100 miles each way from Pennsylvania to teach in the Bronx. She left the first school in which she taught after one year, moving to a school with an arts-supportive principal. Speaking of her first school she recalled,

> Talk about prescriptive -- I mean, we were told what lesson to be on, how your bulletin boards should look, what you should be doing at 10:15. I mean, it was a very rigid kind of situation. And the scores were wonderful; they were very high. But teaching was not fun and I know learning was not fun in those schools, either, for those children. And that's why that school has a high transition of teachers; they always leave at the end of the year. So that's one of the reasons I didn't want to stay there.

All of the teachers have made personal choices during their careers both because of their own interests and passions and to avoid what they saw as negative aspects of teaching. Andy left the classroom after 13 years to become the drama specialist because he says,

> *back then* if I was doing a novel or a reading at, say, 10 o'clock in the morning, I could be doing this theater arts stuff and that's fine. And no one bothered you. *Now*, a supervisor can come into your room and say, 'You know, it's 10:30, you're supposed to be doing journal writing. Why are you doing this?' And then you get written up for it. And that's what turns a lot of people off now. I saw what was happening and I feel I can get more done this way, cause I have a little bit more leverage.

Mirla also left the classroom to become a reading specialist and staff developer because she felt that she could have more of an impact on smaller groups of students. Jenny took over the gifted fifth grade class in part because it allowed her more freedom to pursue creative projects. Tom chose to teach second grade primarily because he felt "in lower elementary there would be

room for that [art]... So I look at science and math and social studies as avenues into some of my artsy projects."

2. ***These teachers are aware of constraints and pressures but are relatively unaffected by them because of their proven effectiveness as teachers.***

The teachers acknowledge the test score pressure but their proven effectiveness seems to insulate them somewhat from the external pressure. Patricia says, "When [a supervisor] has the confidence that you're doing the right thing, you seem to be able to veer from the day-to-day process. We took the practice tests and I was the only class that did very well so I'm being left alone. I can just continue my routine." Jennifer agrees, "[My students] did extremely well in both English Language Arts and in the math. So [the principal] can't really complain. I show them the results." When asked how she could start a poetry project in the weeks leading up to the state reading exam, while the other fifth grades were spending most of their time in test preparation Jennifer replied, "It was like an ice-breaker. How can you cram something into a week's period? You just say, 'since we worked so hard since September, let's have some fun expressing ourselves.'" That attitude is certainly easier to maintain for the teacher of a high performing class, but also reveals a sense of confidence in oneself and trust in the students.

3. ***All of the teachers had an interest in the arts though not all had formal instruction before participating in staff development. They felt that staff development workshops with artists had been key in their ability to implement arts processes in their teaching.***

Four of the six teachers had had formal instruction in at least one art form in their youth. Two discovered their artistic interests in college. Only one of the teachers, Tom, had worked directly in the arts or could be considered an arts teacher. He had run a graphic arts studio and often trained new employees. Other than Tom they all credited professional development experiences as the critical element that stimulated their use of the arts and overall growth as teachers. Patricia, who won music awards for her flute playing as a child, said, "I really haven't used my personal music much with my teaching. I've used more that I learned through [staff development] with rhythms, different beats, clapping, and different sounds you can make, things like that, with my classes." Mirla recalls,

> Even though I love to dance and I like music, I felt very unsure about how to go about introducing it with the classroom. [Staff development] really crystalized my goal in teaching. It helped me to realize that its okay to be talented and to be a dancer and to bring that into the classroom, that could actually help me to teach. That I don't have to

hide that part of myself. That I can do it now. That I could be happy myself. And if I am *happy as a person, then I am a better teacher.*

Andy had never studied theater but when he discovered improvisational theater in staff development workshops he began using it throughout the day in every subject area. He also got involved in theater himself, performing stand-up comedy at improv clubs.

The teachers' reflections on the benefits of staff development workshops in their development focused on three primary areas – 1) practicing risk-taking by being in the position of the learner, 2) learning specific arts facilitation skills in a variety of art forms, and 3) learning in a climate of safety and creativity in collaboration with colleagues and professional artists. These three aspects of successful staff development -- which could be generalized as building empathy, confidence, and support are widely discussed in the literature on creativity in teaching (Torrance, 1970; Wenzel, 1961), teacher development (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1992; Hyde, 1992) and adult learning (Tennant & Pogson, 1995). While these teachers all seem by nature to be particularly creative, caring, confident, individuals, they speak of their experiences in staff development as key to their actual implementation of arts activities. They feel recharged and energized by arts workshops, especially intensive experiences such as summer institutes or full-day weekend workshops.

4. ***The teachers tended to have a particular art form specialty in teaching which led them into the other arts.***

Teachers' own interests and skills tended to define their primary art form. They work most frequently in their area of greatest expertise but also found ways to move into other art forms as well. As was reflected in the findings from the pilot study, theater was the most frequently used art form, primarily because of its immediate connections to literacy. For Jennifer and Andy, theater was their own specialty. Mirla was most comfortable in dance. Patricia, a musician, felt that theater and improvisation skills were the easiest to apply in the classroom. Tom, worked primarily in visual arts. Mike, with the least arts background of the group, had worked extensively with a variety of visiting artists in music and theater, but found the easiest and most productive connections with the visual artists.

The teachers' confidence in their own artistic abilities varied widely. In discussing the role of the arts in teaching they rarely spoke of their own artistic skills or practice, focusing primarily on specific facilitation skills they had acquired and their willingness to take risks in front of their

students. They felt that modeling excellent artistic performance was less important to the students than showing their willingness to try. All felt that their own experiences as a learner in the activity was crucial to their eventual implementation of it in the classroom. Patricia, speaking of learning to lead theater improvisation recalled,

> It's something I would never have tried before, until I was put in the situation where I had to do it. So what I try to do with the class is what was done with me: all those little techniques -- the mirroring of each other and the cooperation. I didn't know any of them. So I learned all of that...The most important thing is to make each other look good. I let [the students] say what they want the scene to be instead of me just picking it. And I always try to be a person that gets up there and does it and they see how hard it is, for even their teacher. Cause I'm not -- acting is my last thing. But I use that more than anything else.

The specific facilitation skills most frequently mentioned by the teachers in all of the art forms concerned their ability to structure arts activities. Structure gave them the confidence they needed to allow the students freedom while maintaining control. Mike says, "there's a ton of freedom, but yet it's disciplined at the same time. There's respect for the other person which makes them more able to focus on their art." Within the structure of the arts activities the teachers felt comfortable changing groupings, giving students leadership roles, making use of the limited space in the classroom, and allowing a certain level of noise and chaos. The teachers felt that command of these aspects of the process, rather than the level of their artistic skills, was the key to their use of the arts in teaching.

The teachers' abilities to move between art forms, even ones with which they are less familiar, depends on their trust in and respect for their students. It is obvious from the way the teachers talk about the climate of their classrooms and the risks they feel comfortable taking in front of their students that they have established the conditions for artistic experiences to take place. The students are comfortable with flexible structures, sound and movement, and have learned to work together on projects. With these conditions in place, teachers can imagine and plan even more complex, in-depth experiences and are more likely to try them. Thus, the development of trust in and familiarity with the artistic process that occurs through satisfying experiences with one art form can make any artistic activity easier to facilitate.

As is common in the arts, many of the teachers' projects were large and multi-disciplinary. Tom's students' masks, banners, and murals were part of large scale performances. Mirla's class transformed their room into an African Village for over a month and explored dance, music,

poetry and visual art. Patricia's fifth grade students worked on "Beauty and the Beast" from December until April, reading five different versions of the book before creating the script, casting and mounting the production, and performing it for the school and parents. These large scale projects are very time consuming and all of the teachers admitted that they do fewer projects than they used to, scaling back both the frequency and scope because of the demands of the curriculum.

Beliefs about art, children and teaching

5. ***The teachers have a broad definition of art. They see the art in all areas of their lives and throughout their teaching.***

For these six teachers the arts most essentially reflect an attitude and an approach toward life and toward teaching. Before discussing artistic skills or specific activities, they described the personal connections they feel -- and that they try to engender in their students -- to the subjects they teach. "You know what I consider art?" Mirla asked. "I think where you learn something and make it your own." Jennifer talks about her whole day in terms of art. "The first thing I say to myself when I wake up at 5:00 a.m. before school to study for my administration course is, 'How can I make this day an artistic process?' Then I try to carry that through my whole day in the classroom and my evening at school. That is what keeps me going."

Mike feels that the essence of art in teaching is "to individualize to each kid's needs. I mean you've got 35 kids and they've all got to be involved." The most commonly discussed motivation for using the arts is the awareness of the diversity of students' needs and the variety of experiences and expressive modalities needed to serve them. Mike says that "the best thing [about arts activities] is that I learn things about kids that I never would learn when they're doing math and reading. So you see different sides of them."

These teachers do not make clear distinctions between art-centered aesthetic experiences, as described by Jackson (1998), and experiences that have aesthetic qualities but are not focused around a specific art work, activity or process. The definition of "arts" in the classroom, especially given the limitations of time and resources, may be somewhat blurred in the teachers' minds. This lack of distinction poses a threat to the validity of self-reported arts usage and to the integrity and success of arts activities themselves. More extensive classroom observations would be necessary to fully clarify the teachers' definitions of arts-centered and general aesthetic

experiences as described by Dewey.

6. ***The teachers have strong beliefs that all students are capable of high achievement.***

The most frequent philosophical rationale cited by the teachers for the use of the arts is their conviction that all students are capable of learning and performing well in school. They are aware of the diversity of student abilities, intelligences, and learning styles, and recognize that there is no single way to reach all students. Success for students is closely linked in the teachers' minds with the instructional modality and the appropriateness of various stimuli to enhance learning. This awareness and belief in the need to differentiate instruction contrasts with the perspective of many teachers surveyed who are less aware of specific student differences and who are more likely to hold fixed beliefs about their students' academic potential. Mirla says, "As long as you find something in the child that is special and you help that child see that something special within them I think they can overcome any problem."

These teachers all mention students in their classes who learn best through artistic means. They can identify students who respond better to non-verbal stimuli, who need to be active and moving, who recognize spatial patterns and relationships, who are leaders in musical experiences or dramatic situations. This awareness of student differences and the effectiveness of the arts to reach the diverse abilities and learning styles of their students is a primary motivating factor for these teachers.

How and Why They Use the Arts

7. ***The teachers do not see the arts as a separate subject. They integrate art activities into many subjects for a variety of instructional purposes. The arts are just as likely to inspire a project as an academic subject.***

The teachers rarely use the arts in isolation from academic content. While they recognized the need for their students to learn and practice basic skills in the art form, most arts activities and content derive from other subject areas. "I don't think you can just have the arts as a separate thing," Patricia explains. "I think it has to be part of what's going on in the classroom and the curriculum." This belief, expressed in various ways by all of the teachers, seems to reflect both the pressure they feel to justify the use of the arts in the classroom and the potential of the arts to enhance the curriculum.

While the content of the arts activity may come from other subjects, the arts are just as

likely to inspire the connections as the curriculum. Tom often begins a project with drawing studies. He looks for common themes with which the students can feel a personal connection. One project began with sketches of kitchen utensils.

> We were just studying them because of their simple shapes. I wanted to give them something that was used around the home. The second grade curriculum is communities of the world and everybody uses some kind of utensils. I was looking for something that could start in a sketchbook and could grow into a painting or would have some kind of movement into another genre of art.

These sketches ultimately led them to an exhibit of molas at the Museum of the American Indian which gave them the idea of layering the drawings, like appliques on colored paper.

Rather than mounting a whole play with his students, Andy frequently uses the dialogue from a single scene in a book they are reading as the starting point for improvisations. They may do the scene repeatedly, alter the attitudes or relationships of the characters, or change the genre of the story. In order to accomplish this complex task, students need to have mastered many of the techniques of improvisation and have an understanding of character, story structure, and genre of writing. These are essential language arts concepts but Andy sees them as growing out of the theater experience. "I want them to act it out rather then just read it. It's like one picture's worth a thousand words."

Mirla finds ways to use dance and music in many areas of her curriculum. In a lesson about behavioral adaptations of animals, students created movement studies demonstrating adaptations to various environments.

> Whenever I teach a lesson, I try to have the children connect with different things in the world. And when we did this lesson, behavior adaptations, they noticed immediately, 'Oh, this is not only about animals, but about us as human beings as well.' And one of the children made a comment, 'Oh, we have adapted ourselves to this classroom, too.' Because teachers have different ways of teaching in a classroom. So they noticed that they adapted to my way of teaching. And I said, 'Well, you know what? I adapted to your way of learning, too! Because you don't learn only by reading and writing, but you learn through dance and you learn through music.' I know that if they do it through movement, through manipulatives, they are going to remember it in ten years time.

Finding the hook, as in a musical composition, means "finding an alternative way to deliver the same concept using different ideas and methods," according to Jennifer:

> Everything's connected...I like this concept of teaching not subject by subject but teaching by concept. If we're talking about patterns let's talk about patterns in all subject areas. If we're talking about the concept of before and after, let's talk about it in all subject areas.

> And then teach them value lessons as well, like there's consequences to your actions. If I have a strong handle on the concept I could basically link to any subject matter... and that's where I get the creativeness out.

The aesthetic qualities of completeness, personal connections, attention to form, full engagement in the activity for its own sake, and multiple forms of expression are clearly present in the way these teachers implement the curriculum. Arts experiences fit into, and expand out from, the basic ways in which they think about curriculum and subjects in a connected, thematic way.

8. ***The teachers articulate a wide range of clear performance and personal growth goals for students in the arts.***

The goals for students primarily concern higher order thinking skills and personal connections to subject matter, social development, behavioral modification and self-regulation, and promoting an enjoyable class atmosphere. They consistently emphasize fun in learning.

While many of the teachers described examples of specific curricular improvement through the arts, particularly in the area of writing, their learning objectives for students tended to be stated in more holistic terms. They want their students to love learning. Mirla says, "I don't want to teach my kids for the test. I want to teach them for their life. I'm doing [the arts] because I know they're going to take it with them forever." "It's like slowing down the process of their thinking sometimes," Tom feels. " If you have to draw about it – draw it and write it – you're going to stop and think about it more. So that seems important. It's a meditative thing, almost, if you have to draw it."

Many of the uses of the arts are not directly curricular. The teachers frequently use arts activities as transitions, to get the students focused, relieve stress, get everyone working together. "It's an attention-grabber," Patricia says. "I'll tell a child, 'It's your turn today to get the class together with the beat.'" She feels that the arts are her most effective tool to build class sprit and cooperation. She intentionally changes groupings and partners in arts activities so that "kids that couldn't work with other people, and no one wanted as a partner, became more accepted into the group." She sees other academic benefits from that cooperation.

> Some kids wouldn't want to take a guess for fear of being put down. The class becomes so much more group oriented that they don't want to hurt each other and that helps a lot – allowing them to get up and express themselves and have the courage to trust each other and learn how to work with people.

The teachers' discussion of learning objectives focused frequently on helping students find

personal connections to curricular subject matter. Tom says, "They don't need to keep sitting there reading and reading and reading. I mean the reading is to get you engaged in life. And if you're not in life and doing stuff then what are you reading about it for?"

Arts educators, looking for the most convincing rationales for the arts in the curriculum sometimes downplay the obvious motivation of fun. Teachers rarely forget this part of the equation. Without diminishing the importance of what the students are learning in the arts, Andy reminds us, "We're in the entertainment business. Keep them interested. If you can keep them interested for 45 minutes you can do a lot. Or else they'll turn the channel." Tom concurs. "I think it's my job to make sure your child wants to come here. And I can trick him into wanting to do that, if I have things here that are going to engage him or her."

The teachers were aware of the existence of arts standards but not the specifics, and standards had little or no effect on their motivation to use the arts. They did not refer to standards either in their planning of lessons or reporting of outcomes. While they occasionally referred to some of the educational theory that had been presented in staff development workshops they did not feel that the theoretical grounding was a major factor in their use of the arts. As Andy recalled, "we used to do all that Multiple Intelligences stuff. But the bottom line is, you can go back and do this stuff with the kids and you just see it working and that's it."

9. ***Each teacher has found multiple ways to use the arts and to play a variety of facilitator roles based on their own strengths.***

A range of artistic experiences in a variety of disciplines are offered in these teachers' classrooms and encompass art-making, observation, discussion, and analysis. Teachers play different roles as facilitator, collaborator and participant in these experiences. The teacher's level of comfort as facilitator in the various disciplines seemed to define how he or she used each art form in the classroom. In their primary art forms they tended to try more active art-making processes while in others, the activities tended to be focused on responding to and appreciating existing art work. In both creating and responding activities the teachers demonstrated many of the same qualities as facilitator in setting up the structure, leading discussion, encouraging unique responses, making connections to life and personal experience, and allowing students time to reflect on and integrate their art experience.

Collaborations with visiting artists, colleagues and in-school specialists provided other entry points for artistic links and curriculum connections in their primary art forms and in all of the

other arts. Mike, who had the least previous arts experience of any of the teachers and did not take part in the intensive summer institutes, worked closely with a series of artists over a two year period. He was an active collaborator while the artist was working with his students and found ways to keep the artistic process going and make relevant connections to the curriculum between the artists' visits. He admits that he was somewhat skeptical at first. "I thought the clay project was going to be totally disruptive, but it worked great. It's a good atmosphere that she creates. It never seems like she's lecturing, she's talking to the person. She's always asking questions and going back and forth and it never seems to be a question that they can't really answer. And their answers are always important to her. I like her whole approach. It just works." Mike's enthusiasm for the arts is clearly communicated to the students and is a critical element in making the visiting artist successful. He credits the success of these collaborations with his respect for the artist as an effective teacher, the chance for regular joint planning and reflection time with the artist and a staff development facilitator, and the active role that he was encouraged to take in the arts activities in the classroom.

Tom, who facilitated extensive, large scale visual art projects, but was not comfortable leading music or dance, frequently collaborated with his second grade colleague across the hall who played the piano and directed the students in singing. They often combined the two classes and broke into separate arts groups so that all of the students had opportunities to work in visual art, music, and dance. Though he rarely led dance activities himself, Tom showed his students videos of dance, studied important figures such as Alvin Ailey, and displayed posters of prominent artists in his room. While his specific knowledge of other art forms was not as extensive as his knowledge of visual arts, his understanding of the aesthetic principals and his artistic pedagogy, along with his sensitivity and enthusiasm for other arts, made his forays into less familiar territory successful.

Discussion and Analysis

The study of these six urban elementary school teachers paints a complex and highly diverse picture of arts use in the classroom. While they share a number of personality characteristics that seem to have helped them create an artistic climate in their classrooms, the types and frequency of arts experiences they facilitate varies greatly. They stand out as high arts users only in the broadest definition of arts as experience. None (except Andy, the theater specialist) claim to employ arts activities every day. What seems to distinguish these individuals

are attitudes that support the arts and their specific skills as facilitators of artistic processes. They exhibit ways of being and thinking about teaching that enhance the aesthetic aspects of academic experiences and they consistently support the artistic expression of their students.

While these conditions enhance the potential for aesthetic experiences and make it possible for the arts to be practiced, they do not guarantee that they will. Arts-centered aesthetic experiences, as opposed to aesthetic appreciation of everyday experience, requires knowledge of and attention to specific artistic forms and processes. These teachers have knowledge of the process and form, in at least one discipline, and have clear ideas of the learning and behavioral objectives they seek to accomplish with arts activities. Further, they are comfortable enough with themselves and their students to launch into an open-ended process amidst the pressures and physical constraints of the school day and the classroom.

Despite their independent natures and proven effectiveness, these teachers are not immune to external pressure for test improvement and "coverage" of an ever-expanding and standardized curriculum. All of the upper grade classroom teachers spoke wistfully about successful arts-based projects they used to do that they no longer feel they have the time to do as well. They describe the types of arts activities they currently do as more tightly folded into other lessons than they were in the past. For instance, Patricia's students still role play characters from a story but she is less likely to spend the time having students go further with these characters, write and perform their original version of the story, work on drawings, or learn songs related to the subject. To the extent that the narrower focus limits the completeness of the experience and offers fewer opportunities for students to reflect, integrate, and deepen their understanding, the artistic and aesthetic qualities of these smaller scale arts activities may be impaired.

The limited time and scope allowed for the arts makes the teacher's command of facilitation skills more critical. The teacher must have sufficient mastery to move spontaneously and seamlessly from one mode to another, in and out of artistic experience, during the course of the day or during a single period. In a long-term arts projects the teacher has more time to plan, get assistance from others, and adjust the priority given to arts activities to fit into the rest of the daily schedule. As artistic explorations are nested more tightly into other lessons, the teacher needs to expertly balance the elements and requirements of the arts process to insure that it is, in fact, an artistic experience for the students. While these teachers, having already gained confidence with larger scale projects, have, for the most part, been able to narrow their focus and

maintain an artistic approach, teachers just beginning to use the arts may find it difficult to learn to facilitate artistic experiences within the tighter constraints and pressures found in many schools today.

Concerns for the integrity of the arts within the curriculum causes some arts educators to question whether teachers should be encouraged to lead art-making activities at all. Some feel that teachers should limit themselves to discussing and analyzing art works or working with arts specialists rather than trying to facilitate active art-making processes with students. These findings suggest that while teachers are most comfortable leading art-making processes in one art form, they are able to apply many of the same facilitation skills to other forms in which they are less comfortable. The internalized knowledge of the process and the artistic skills and attitudes, developed through their own learning and teaching in the arts, provides the basis for further explorations. This is not to suggest that there is always a developmental progression from observing, to analyzing, to making art. The teacher may never lead an active music-making activity in the classroom but can still find numerous ways to include music in a meaningful way on regular basis. The findings support the idea that in order to realize the potential of the arts to affect teaching and learning it is highly beneficial for the facilitator to feel confident enough in at least one arts area to move beyond verbal interaction and into multiple forms of expression. The teacher's motivation to include the arts and his or her range of facilitation skills – what Andy calls "my arsenal of weapons" – seem to be based, to a great extent, on an attitude of risk-taking and the desire to involve many expressive modalities. Remaining in the safety of the discussion mode may thus undermine the spontaneous motivation of the teacher to use an artistic process in the first place.

The types of artistic discourse that the teachers led with their students tended to be centered around personal art-making experiences. The students' sketches of kitchen utensils became a focal point for cross-cultural comparisons in social studies throughout the year. A dance activity led to poetry writing and then to a discussion on the process of writing and how ideas are generated. An improvisation with characters from Charlotte's Web led to a discussion on whether Wilbur the pig could truly be happy without other pigs on the farm. The teachers used the participatory arts activities to generate ideas, emphasize large themes, and illuminate aspects of the learning process. The art, in these classrooms, is the action around which Eisner says "the main aim is to teach children to think, to act, and to learn from the consequences of their actions"

(1985, p. 139).

For these teachers, the artistic point of view in life and in teaching is a primary value. They are looking for deeper meanings and want the subjects they teach to be memorable for the students. They see the arts as the most effective tool they have to reach those goals. As Mirla says, "I'm doing this because I know that they're going to take it with them forever." When depth and endurance of experience are central curricular values, then the lack of time, space, and support for artistic activities may be less daunting. If anything, the academic pressures and decreasing arts resources in the schools increase the teachers' perceptions of the needs of students for arts involvement and expressive outlets. These six already committed, independent, creative and skilled teachers are not likely to quit using the arts, although they may use them less than before. The challenge is to find ways to overcome the obstacles for others who may be more skeptical, less open to risk-taking, and more influenced by external pressure.

Implications for Staff Development in the Arts

These teachers provide evidence for the potential of arts workshops to affect teacher behaviors and attitudes. They are undoubtedly unusually receptive and creative individuals but all contend that staff development was essential for the application of their arts interests into classroom practice. Staff developers in the arts often express frustration both at the lack of training time and the difficulty of observing or measuring the effects of training. Teachers may leave arts workshops inspired, full of energy and good intentions to apply what they have learned, but frequently report little change in their practice once they return to the classroom. As with the acquisition of any new skill, the learner rarely has clear perspective on the challenges involved in application and needs ongoing support beyond the initial introduction. Single workshops, or even multi-day institutes alone, rarely result in lasting changes in practice.

Successful implementation of the arts for most of these teachers was the result of long-term involvement in staff development for two to six years. Through a comprehensive model, widely used in other areas of staff development, teachers moved from personal experiences in adult group learning settings, to observation and collaboration with trainers and colleagues in their own classrooms, to independent use of the approach with on-going opportunities for advice and sharing with colleagues and expert mentors. The teachers felt that all of the components were critical to their independent use of artistic techniques and methods. Their continuing involvement

demonstrated their enjoyment and commitment to personal and professional growth.

The teachers' use of one primary art form, and the role of that art form as a stepping stone to other arts activities, highlights the need for choice in staff development and for opportunities to acquire advanced as well as basic skills. Most staff development initiatives stay at an introductory level. Even extended arts workshops often have general exposure, rather than specific implementation, as their main goals for teachers. This is understandable, given the variety of experience and ability levels of the participating teachers. The teachers in this study remind us, however, that previous experience in the arts is not an absolute prerequisite for becoming an effective facilitator of arts activities. They felt that repeated immersion in the arts in summer institutes was invaluable in helping them adapt arts processes for the classroom and in preparing them to implement those adaptations. With the opportunity to work intensively in a single art form every day they were able to experience the completion of arts processes, see potential products and outcomes, repeat and add to basic warm-up activities, and practice risk-taking in a highly supportive environment. The sense of wholeness in the experience, which is almost impossible to achieve in stand-alone or after-school workshops, is key to allowing personal connections, feelings, and memories to emerge. Teachers' experiences as learners -- taking risks, dealing with self-consciousness, gaining confidence and feeling successful -- may lead to the most lasting lessons taken from the arts workshop.

When they went back to school, teachers were able to collaborate with the professional teaching artists to create and then teach arts-integrated lessons with their classes. As the teachers gained confidence in leading arts processes the artists took an advisory role. For Jenny, Patricia, Mirla, and Andy, the arts professionals became effective mentors for up to three years. Such mentorship models often face particular obstacles in the arts. Few artist residency programs are of long enough duration to support ongoing mentorships with classroom teachers and in-school arts specialists are rarely available to collaborate because they are covering the teachers' preparation periods.

Implications for widespread staff development that can be drawn from these findings are limited. Looking only at a high-use group gives few clues as to what will move less interested teachers to participate or find benefit in arts training. This is the first stage of a larger study that will look at the motivations and concerns of teachers along a continuum of arts participation and use. This phase of the study helps us begin to define the high range and see the diversity of actual

practices and to investigate the effects of specific staff development interventions. In the next stage a much wider sample of K-12 urban, suburban, and rural teachers, both participants and non-participants in arts-based staff development, will be surveyed. Groups defined by level and frequency of arts use, patterns of attitudes and concerns, and background characteristics will be sampled and interviewed to provide comparative data. These additional insights will help us put the experiences of the high-use group into a developmental perspective.

Conclusion

The question of whether the arts can be effectively taught to anyone or if these teachers are simply unusually creative, artistic individuals who were highly receptive to arts-based staff development cannot be adequately answered from this small sample of teachers. A few generalizations can be made on the subject, however. The attitudes and skills required to use the arts do not seem to be dependent on one's personal background in the arts, current artistic practice, or a specific set of skills. Rather, teachers are able to apply their knowledge of artistic processes and forms to find aesthetic qualities in academic subject matter, to use many modes and entry points into arts experiences, and to employ the arts to further a wide range of curricular and behavioral goals for their students.

Their educational values stem from deep caring about children and an artistic attitude toward life. Their objectives for students are emotional and behavioral, as well as curricular. Mirla's goal is to have her students love reading and always carry a book with them. Tom wants to slow down the students' thinking to allow them to ponder and look. Andy wants students to be risk-takers. Patricia wants them to collaborate and respect each other. Mike wants them to learn focus and discipline. Jennifer hopes to inspire unique, imaginative thinking. These values, more than a specific content objective, motivates the teachers' use of the arts.

These teachers use the arts because they are driven to do so. It is the expression of their passions and interests in the world and commitment to children and teaching. They see the art in every technique that helps them reach more students more deeply. The difficulty in studying applications of the arts in the classroom thus comes back to one of definition. In the moment-to-moment experience of teaching, the line between appreciation of aesthetic qualities in everyday experience and full-fledged arts activities may be too fine to distinguish. From the teachers' points of view, it seems that the challenge is to be an artist in teaching and to seek to nurture the artist in each child. To the extent that staff development experiences can open the door to the artist,

demonstrate an artistic model of instruction, and provide personal meaning in teaching and learning, they can make a difference in daily teaching practice. Ultimately the goal of learning to teach the arts is to make all teaching more artistic.

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